

Candidates running quieter in the 43rd U.S. District race

By Jean Oiswang
The Register

The contest for California's 43rd Congressional District has gone virtually unnoticed this year — a quiet counterpoint to 1982, when Republican Ron Packard was triumphant in a bitter write-in campaign.

That year, travel-trailer tycoon Johnnie Crean of San Juan Capistrano spent an estimated \$1 million in a mudslinging campaign to win in the 18-candidate Republican field.

Crean lost the general election to Packard, former mayor of Carlsbad, who became the fourth person in congressional history to win a write-in campaign.

Packard, a 53-year-old dentist, recently said his current campaign has "much less visibility" than the last contest. He denied assertions by some of his challengers that his 1982 election was merely an "anyone but Crean" backlash and said he expects constituents to want him to stay in office.

He has no lack of challengers. Including Packard, voters will have their choice of six candidates, representing three political parties, in the 43rd District race.

"I'm sure people didn't elect me two years ago just for a single term," Packard said recently from his Washington office. "It doesn't work to a district's advantage to have turnovers in representation every two years."

The 43rd Congressional District covers much of San Diego County and south Orange County, stretching north to Mission Viejo. Challenging Packard for his party's nomination is San Marcos Republican Margaret Ferguson.

Packard said his first term in Congress has been fruitful, including a bill he wrote to authorize the broadcasting of the Olympics over Radio Free Europe. Other Packard bills have been crafted to address the raw sewage problem along the border from the Tia Juana River and allowing religious groups access to school facilities during after-school hours.

Packard said he also has pulled federal dollars to such Orange County cities as San Clemente, for senior citizen projects, and has authored bills for funds to improve Interstate 5 and complete the San Joaquin Hills Corridor in Orange County.

Last week, Packard introduced a Reagan administration bill that would allow high school students to work during the summer for less than minimum wage.

Ferguson, who owns and operates a real estate and property management firm, also is an administrative assistant to San Diego County Supervisor Paul Eckert. She moved into politics through involvement in the local PTA.

Ferguson, 54, said she decided to run against Packard because of a lack of leadership on his part and because of his failure to vote favorably on such senior-oriented legislation as Meals for Older Americans.

A first-time candidate, Ferguson said she hopes to bring two attributes to Congress: an extensive background in planning and land-use issues, and in water and reclamation. She served for 10 years on the San Diego Planning Commission and is a member of the San Marcos Water District Board of Trustees.

"Ron has not shown real leadership, which is obvious by the amount of times he has used the excuse, 'freshman congressman,'" Ferguson said. "He won the write-in because of Crean; it was a backlash. We want to give voters a choice."

In the Democratic primary, usually considered an exercise in futility in heavily Republican 43rd District, Lois Humphreys of Carlsbad is stressing her experience as director of the Leucadia County Water District.

Humphreys, 37, and Orange County anti-nuclear advocate Randy Toler, are splitting the Democratic ballot with civil engineer Kevin Schmidt of Vista. Phyllis Avery, a political researcher from Oceanside, is the Libertarian candidate.

Humphreys wrote and was successful in passing a proposition to preserve the Batiquitos Lagoon in Leucadia. She was named Citizen of the Year in 1971 by the Leucadia Town Council.

"We are living in a time when some of the problems that face us seem insurmountable," Humphreys said in a campaign statement. "Our budget deficit is being argued as a partisan issue, when the reality is that it is everyone's problem. We and our children are faced everyday with the threat of nuclear war — this too is a problem that is not a partisan issue."

Toler and Schmidt could not be reached for comment on their campaigns. Toler, chairman of the International Green Party, an environmentalist group, had sought to be listed as an environmental activist on the primary ballot. Instead, his occupation will ap-

ful race for the 22nd Senate District in Santa Monica two years ago. She conceded that her candidacy for Packard's office faces "an uphill fight" but said the Libertarian Party plays an important function in the political process.

"We're basically an educational group," she said. "We are an important part of the process because we say something totally different than what the other two parties are saying."

Avery said she is not battling Packard so much as she is fighting government itself, which she said has elevated society above the individual.

Sticking to the Libertarian philosophy of governmental non-intervention, Avery said she favors making Social Security voluntary, abolishing the CIA and ceasing foreign aid.

She said she also favors a balanced-budget amendment and the "Liberty Amendment," which would abolish personal income tax.



Margaret Ferguson



Lois Humphreys



Ron Packard



Randy Toler

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